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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SAO PAULO 000626

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SUBJECT: CONSULAR SECTION ENTRY-LEVEL OFFICER ROTATION UPDATE: NIV
DEPUTY

REF: A) OIG REPORT NUMBER ISP-I-08-15A, MARCH 2008; B) SAO PAULO 99

¶1. Summary: In response to ConGen Sao Paulo's 2008 Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report (Ref A), the Consular Section assigned an entry-level officer (ELO) to perform the duties of a non-immigrant visa (NIV) unit deputy on a six-month, rotational basis. The assignment allows entry-level officers to gain valuable management experience and exposure to the inner-workings of NIV administration while filling an important management-level staffing gap in the section. End summary.

Background

¶2. According to post volume records in the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD), Sao Paulo's Consular section was the largest U.S. NIV processing post in the world in FY 2009. A total of 14 ELOs adjudicate up to 1,500 NIV applications per day. These officers are managed by one Consular Section Chief and one NIV Chief, and are supported by over 40 locally-employed (LE) staff.

¶3. Despite this heavy visa workload, officers have enjoyed increased opportunities for professional development through Sao Paulo's rotation program (Ref B). This program permits each officer assigned to a straight two-year consular tour to choose from one of three six-month rotations: NIV deputy; Fraud Prevention Unit deputy; or American Citizen Services unit officer. The Section created the ELO NIV Deputy rotation in response to Post's March 2008 OIG report that recommended the creation of a full-time FS-03 NIV Deputy position. This solution has allowed the Section to fill an important void while gaining a better understanding as to how best utilize the future FS-03 NIV Deputy Officer.

¶4. The ELO NIV Deputy is primarily responsible for visa line management to ensure that visa work is completed as efficiently and effectively as possible. The primary duties include managing the window allocation and schedules for ELOs, Eligible Family Member (EFM) biometric clerks, and LE Staff, as well as assisting the NIV Chief with appointment scheduling, visa waiting room flow issues, visa corrections and quality control, and training and orientation of new ELOs and EFMs. The ELO NIV Deputy position also serves as a key interface between section management and officers, thereby facilitating communication and understanding up and down the chain. The ELO NIV Deputy is also responsible for conducting NIV interviews for half of the day. The first Officer to complete this rotation did so on September 30, 2009.

Lessons Learned

¶5. The creation of the ELO NIV Deputy Position has been a very positive experience for the Consular Section. The NIV Chief now has more time to focus on maximizing section productivity, standardizing NIV adjudications, improving officer productivity, coaching new officers and LE Staff, and focusing on other management, human and financial resource issues.

¶6. The ELO NIV Deputy also greatly benefited from this experience. The ELO NIV Deputy gained valuable management, leadership and team-building experience, as well as insight into balancing the demands of the visa section with the needs of individual Officers, LE Staff and EFMs. As a peer, the position also required the ELO NIV Deputy to create an environment that facilitates full participation and an open exchange of ideas to motivate all officers towards common objectives. Perhaps most importantly, the creation of this position has provided another much-needed layer of management to such a large visa section. Now ELOs, LE Staff, EFMs and biometric clerks have another point of contact for issues, as they arise. This frees up the time of the NIV and Consular Section Chiefs, thereby improving section productivity as a whole.

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¶7. Comment: The newly-created ELO NIV Deputy position has become an invaluable position in the world's largest visa issuing post. The ELO NIV Deputy acquires important skills and experiences that are often difficult to obtain so early in an officer's career. The Section now finds itself better prepared for the anticipated FY 2010 assignment of a full-time FS-03 NIV deputy. End comment.
White